

CHAPTER II

HISTORY OF THE JAVANESE IN SURINAME AND ITS ORGANIZATIONS

In this chapter the author explicate about the history of the first Javanese arriving in Suriname. The history of how Javanese people can live in Suriname. It also explicate the history of the Javanese organization confirmed in Suriname. The encouragement estbalishing Javansese organizations as aim to change the pereption of the Surinamese population towards the Javanese diaspora. furthermore, this chapter also discusses about the activities of the Javanese organization in Suriname.

2.1 The History of Javanese in Suriname

Suriname is a country located in the north coast of South America which is estimated 163.821 km². According to the General Bureau of Statistic (ABS), Suriname posses a population of about 568.301²⁸ with Paramaribo as the capital. The Capital Lies 15 KM from the Atlantic Ocean connected with the Suriname River. It borders with Guyana in the East, French Guyana in the West, Brazil in the South and the Atlantic Ocean in the North. Suriname was formerly known as Dutch Guyana and was a plantation colony of the Netherlands. Dutch colonized started in 1667 and gained ultimately its independence on November 25, 1975.²⁹ The native

²⁸ World Population, *Suriname Population 2018* , accessed in <http://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/suriname-population/> (15/02/2018 21:43 WIB)

²⁹ Vernom Domingo, *Surinamese Migration and Development* , British Water Review, vol. 14, Issue 1, June 1995. p.8

people of Suriname are *Arowak* and *Caraib*, which are also the native people of South America. Suriname has a tropical climate with four seasons e.g minor rainy season, minor dry season, major rainy season and major dry season. Suriname is one of the smallest country in South America what made Indonesia dozen times bigger than Suriname. Suriname have 10 districts e.g Paramaribo, Wanica, Nickerie, Coronie, Saramacca, Commewijne, Para, Marowijne, Brokopondo, and Sipaliwini.³⁰ Dutch is the official language of Suriname, but the extent to which members of the various ethnic groups are able to use the language differs. The major religion is Christianity, brought by the colonizers of Netherlands and England to Suriname which also was one of the aim to achieve. The christianity is divided in Roman Catholics and Moravians.

Suriname itself is a multicultural country with one of the most ethnically diverse in the region e.g African, Latin, Javanese, Indian, Chinese, Jewish and European people.³¹ Javanese is ranked as the 4th largest population with 15% of the population.³² However, the Indian contract labors from India are the largest ethnic group in Suriname. These Indians making up more than one fourth of the Population while Maroons- descendants of escaped slaves of African Origin, make up for about

³⁰ Ellen Kembel, *Indigenous people in Suriname and the maroons*, accessed in https://www.researchgate.net/publication/254421356_Indigenous_Peoples_and_Maroons_in_Suriname?enrichId=rgreq-f7f44fad5060e29cdff5b13f30a5b22-XXX&enrichSource=Y292ZXJQYWdlOzI1NDQyMTM1NjtBUzoXNDcxMjMxODYxODAwOTdAMTQxMjA4ODMwOTc4NQ%3D%3D&el=1_x_2&_esc=publicationCoverPdf (25/06/2018, 23:00 WIB)

³¹ Monique C. Menzo, *A study on language use, ethnic boundaries, core values and national identification among Creoles and Hindustanis in Suriname*, accessed in <http://arno.uvt.nl/show.cgi?fid=127779> (20/04/2018)

³² Peter Meel, *Continuity Through Diversity: The Surinamese Javanese Diaspora and the Homeland Anchorage*. wadabagei.2011.vol.13. no.3. p. 96

one- fifth of the population. Suriname people of mainly african descent called Creoles, forms between one-tenth and one fifth of the population. The Maroon and Creoles are both from African descendant. The difference is that Creoles lives in the city, while maroon lives in forestry of Suriname. The descendants of Javanese and other people of mixed ethnicity in Suriname, each make up almost one-seventh of the population.³³

Perhaps few Indonesian people ascertain that there is a large community of people of Indonesian descent living in the northern of South America. Over 70,000 Javanese descendant live in Suriname,³⁴ a former Dutch colony and vibrant multicultural country. Although they have been living in Suriname for several generations, many of them still identify as Javanese, even though very few have ever visited Indonesia especially Java island or maintain family connections over there. They speak a creolized version of the Javanese language also known as *Jawa Ngoko*. Javanese names crop up at all levels of society and elements of Javanese culture such as cuisine which has influenced this Caribbean nation's culture.³⁵

³³ Jack Menke&Henck Chin, Suriname, accessed in <https://www.britannica.com/place/Suriname> (20/04/2018, 20:21 WIB)

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ Rosemarijn hoeft, The Javanese of Suriname, accessed in <http://www.insideindonesia.org/the-javanese-of-suriname> (21/04/2018, 23:22 WIB)

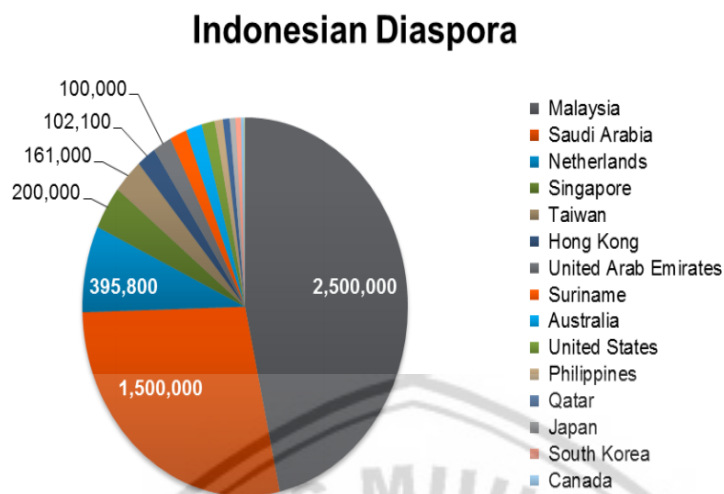


Figure 2.1 Diaspora World Rank. According to the minister of foreign affairs in Indonesia, Suriname is at the eight rank³⁶

Suriname is known as a country which is very fertile and rich in natural resources such as gold, aluminum, and bauxite. Suriname is a former Netherlands colony in which Suriname was colonized as long for 3 centuries.³⁷ It all has to do with the erasure of the slavery system at that time and the importance of the plantation system in Suriname. The end of the slavery system in 1863 carries the consequences of the loss of workers on plantations in Dutch colonial territory which made the need of man power. In 1863 the Dutch government liberates approximately 33,000 slaves in Suriname. The consequences of the abolition of slavery, the authorities followed other Caribbean colonies by importing contract workers from British India to supply the plantations with cheap and obedient

³⁶ Kementrian luar negri, Diaspora Indonesia , accessed in www.kemlu.go.id/diasoira-Indonesia (20/07/2018, 10:23 WIB)

³⁷ Project Cure Clinics, *THE REPUBLIC OF SURINAME, Country Overview* , accesed in https://projectcure.org/sites/default/files/wysiwyg-assets/Travel/country_overview_-_suriname.pdf (20/05/2018 21:23 WIB)

labor.³⁸ These workers were contracted for five years. The five-year contracts detailed the rights and the duties of the indentures³⁹. The most important to the contract labor system was the so-called penal sanction, which gave the employer the right to press criminal charges against indentures who broke their labour contract.

Labor shortages in the plantation in Suriname cause the Dutch government finally decided to allow the first experiment with one hundred Javanese contract migrants in 1890.⁴⁰ In the beginning, the Dutch government prohibits Javanese to immigrate to Suriname. This is due to the contract workers they already had on the plantations- from India and that the populace of Java was not inclined to migrate to far-away and unknown Suriname. Despite doubts about the physical strength of the new laborers, Javanese migration to Suriname was now authorized. In total, almost 33,000 Javanese migrated to Suriname in the period 1890-193 however, heaps of Javanese contract labors died in the shipboard during their trip to Suriname. The contract workers where originated from Central Java and the regions near Batavia – now Jakarta, Surabaya, and Semarang which were the main recruitment areas.

The Javanese migrants were assigned to various plantations, mostly plantation Mariënborg. According to the contract, the plantation had to provide free housing for its indentured laborers. However, the quality of the housing was often substandard. This is preached by H. van Vleuten, the official of The Dutch East

³⁸ Hoeft, *Op.Cit*

³⁹ a formal legal agreement, contract, or document, in particular. (Surat perjanjian rekap dua)

⁴⁰Rosemarijn Hoeft, *Cleansing the world of the germ of laziness: hygiene, sanitation, and the Javanese population in Suriname*, Rio De Janeiro. Vol. 21 No.4 p.1440

Indian. In 1909 he investigates the living and working conditions of the Javanese contract workers in Suriname, where the domestic life of the Javanese immigrants appeared extremely miserable.⁴¹ Most of the rooms 'gave the impression of great poverty of their inhabitants. Another problem the Javanese workers has to deal with was in wage distribution. It was clear that the labor contract fixed the wages of those workers according to their job. Yet most indentures pointed out that they did not earn the listed wages. Eventually, Van Vleuten concluded that the average wage earned by contract laborers was far below the minimum. The earnings of the contract laborers were much too low to make a living in a colony as expensive as Suriname.⁴²

Another problem these Javanese had to cope with was the adaptation to a new life, food differs and also work regime in a new unfriendly environment. As a result, homesickness plagued many of the migrants. The desire to return to Java served as a form of escapism. This escapism and other techniques, such as feigned illnesses, served as hidden forms of protest against the indenture system. It was all in vain because they were only able to return if the contract was completed. All these struggles the Javanese people faced was only a foretaste of what Suriname has to offer. After all the struggle they faced during work, only 20 to 25 percent or 8.400 Javanese returned to their home country before World War II after their employment contract has completed.⁴³ This was the start of the Javanese diaspora

⁴¹ Rosemarijn Hoeffte, *The Javanese of Suriname*, accessed in <http://www.insideindonesia.org/the-javanese-of-suriname> (20/04/2018, 20:57 WIB)

⁴² *Ibid.*.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

in Suriname. The great majority of the immigrants settled permanently in Suriname. Others move to the Netherlands after the independency of Suriname in 1975. The immigration to the Netherlands was the haunting fear they had that Suriname would not be able to control the country. On the average more than the half of Javanese diaspora that lives in Suriname opt to Suriname citizen or Netherlands citizen. The most Javanese people that live in Netherlands are migrated from Suriname.



Figure 2.2 Map of Suriname:

Among the 10 districts in Suriname, Javanese people are spread over the whole country, but most of them live in district Paramaribo in the village called Commewijne, district Wanica in the village called Leleydorp and district Saramacca. Javanese people who live far from the capital city usually are

agriculturist, what also was the background of sending the Javanese people to Suriname.⁴⁴

2.2 History of Javanese Organizations in Suriname

Along the time the Javanese people in Suriname initiate progressing to educate themselves. They turn out as active Surinamese-Javanese and began to pay attention to the Javanese group to obtain their rights. In order to obtain their rights, the active group of the Javanese diaspora began to establish some organizations to protect and stand up for the Javanese in Suriname.⁴⁵ They established various organizations to denote the Surinamese population that Javanese in Suriname exist and are not the society that is left behind. In that time Javanese people were known as lazy, uneducated people who did not distribute to the society. They did not participate in political or educational activities. Javanese were viewed as unmotivated while Creoles mistreated the Javanese and looked down on them as *lau-lau yam-paneisi* – which means ‘stupid Javanese’.⁴⁶ Javanese were known as only people who worked hard for their family and were married at a young age. They went to the elementary school or Junior high school. After they finished their school they went to search for work. This tradition was so familiar in Surinamese-Javanese families which became a perception to the other ethnic group in Suriname. To change this perception, a group of active Javanese people began to establish various kind of organizations.

⁴⁴ Infoplease, *Suriname Map*, accessed in <https://www.infoplease.com/atlas/suriname> (04/06/2018, 23:09 WIB)

⁴⁵ Interview with the chairmain of Pertjajah Luhur, Paul Somoharjo, 04 April 2018

⁴⁶ Hoefte, *Op.Cit* p. 15

There are various organizations namely political organizations, cultural organization, religious organization and so on. These organizations have their own activities which are related to the Javanese culture or the Javanese population in Suriname. This kind of bond with the Javanese culture and Javanese population conserve the love for their homeland Indonesia. The Javanese Organization in Suriname were established a couple years after the first Javanese people entered Suriname. These organization fight for the right and equality of Javanese people, so they can get a decent life in a newly independent country.

The definition of an organization is diverse, depending on the point of view used to see organizations. Organizations can be seen as a container, as a process, as a behavior, and as a tool to achieve goals. But thus, the definition of an organization that has been put forward by organizational experts at least there are elements of the system of cooperation, people who work together and shared goals to be achieved. An Organization is a system of consciously coordinated activities or efforts of two or more persons.⁴⁷

Organizations can also be thought of as “social entities that are goal directed, deliberately structured activity systems with a permeable boundary which have mechanistic and organic structures.”⁴⁸ Robbins defined the organization as a social unit that is coordinated consciously, with a relatively identifiable limitation, which works on a relatively continuous basis to achieve a common goal or group

⁴⁷Course hero, *What is an organization*, accsed in <https://www.coursehero.com/file/12964356/Chapter-1/>

⁴⁸Barnard, C. I. 1938. *The functions of the executive*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, p. 73.

of goals.⁴⁹ While Hassibuan defined it as a formal, structured, and coordinated union system of groups of people who work together in achieving certain goals.⁵⁰ According to the Indonesian dictionary, An organization is a unit consisting of parts in the association for a specific purpose; cooperation groups between people held to achieve common goals. In sum, an organization is a container-a collection of people- with an organizational structure to achieve common goals.

2.3 Javanese Organization in Suriname

Suriname have some Javanese organizations which are familiar among the Javanese and the Surinamese population. The first one is the organization which organizes cultural activities called VHJI (*Vereniging Herdengking Javaanse Imigratie*) in English Memorial Javanese Immigration Association. The second one is an organization in political activities called Pertjajah luhur and the last one is an organization in religious activities called SIS (*Stichting der Islamitische gemeente in Suriname*) or foundation of the Islamic community in Suriname. These are the three most popular organizations in Suriname. This research will only focus on the three organization that are mention above, besides those organizations, there are other several organizations which accommodate the Javanese population in Suriname.

These Javanese organizations are established to conserve the brotherhood among the Javanese in Suriname moreover, they also conserve the Javanese roots

⁴⁹ Stephan Robbins., 1994. *Teori Organisasi: Struktur, Desain dan Aplikasi*, Alih Bahasa Jusuf Udaya, Jakarta, Arcan p.4

⁵⁰ Hasibuan, Malayu S.P. 2010. *Manajemen Sumber Daya Manusia*. Jakarta: PT Bumi Aksara. p.120

and culture. Meeting and knowing that some people or from the same roots, have the same culture, and speaks the same language make the other feel extra ordinary happy. That's why there are such Javanese people which still want to take care of the Javanese brotherhood among the Javanese people in Suriname.

2.3.1 Political Organizations

Political organization of Suriname was closely linked to ethnic groups that were brought to the country during the plantation era. Parties, therefore, had a distinctly ethnic bias, which played a role in the internal distribution of power. Political parties were also strictly managed from the top, which meant that the power of decision largely rested with the chairman, who was often surrounded by a small circle.⁵¹ Patronage was a common phenomenon in Suriname, which is the act of arranging specific favors for one's own supporters. The political parties in Suriname functioned in a society where other organizations had authoritative voices, the most outspoken voices being from religious organizations. Social partners (e.g. trade unions) and NGOs were also important, but the government did not cooperate with them closely enough in order to establish substantive policies.

Suriname has been an independent republic since 1975. Its political institutions are defined by the constitution of 1987. The National Assembly has fifty-one members who are elected for a five-year term by proportional representation.⁵² The president is elected by a two-thirds majority in the Assembly.

⁵¹ Netherlands Institute for Multi Party Democracy, *NIMD Country Programme Suriname*, accessed in <https://nimd.org/programmes/suriname/> (22/06/2018, 08:54 WIB)

⁵² Freedom House, *Suriname*, accessed in <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2016/suriname> (21/06/2018, 07:33 WIB)

The president appoints the cabinet ministers. The Council of State, chaired by the president and including representatives of the military, trade unions, business, and political parties, can veto legislation that violates the constitution.⁵³ Most political parties are based on ethnicity. Party politics are characterized by fragmentation and the frequent splitting up of parties. Since the elections of 1955, no party has had a majority in the National Assembly, and so coalitions are always necessary to form a government.

Politically, the importance of the Javanese population group is indisputable. The Javanese often hold the balance between the larger and more powerful Afro-Surinamese and Hindustani (former British Indians) groups. At present, Paul Slamet Somohardjo is the first-ever Javanese Speaker of the National Assembly. Their socioeconomic development was slower, but since the 1960s the Javanese have been catching up with other population groups, even though the urbanization rate is still lower than that of other large groups. Following the demise of the plantations in the first half of the twentieth century, many Javanese found work in the bauxite industry and the agricultural sector. Only in the last decades of the last century did the Javanese presence in businesses, the professions, and the civil service increase. Subsequently, the first Javanese political party to be established in Suriname, *Kaum Tani Persatuan Indonesia*, KTPI (The Indonesian Farmers' Union), which was founded by Ideng Soemita in 1947,⁵⁴ a man from Sundanese

⁵³ Henry, *Politic situation in Suriname*, accessed in <http://www.everyculture.com/Sa-Th/Suriname.html#ixzz5Cd1Muh3W> (23/05/2018 , 16:27 WIB)

⁵⁴ Pamela Allen, *Repatriation and Nostalgia for Home Among the Javanese of Suriname*, Indonesian Study Working Papers, no 16, July 2013 , University of Sydney, P1

descent but a lot of people in Suriname knows him as a Javanese. In Suriname, there is no difference between a Javanese and Sundanese or others. People who came from Indonesia are all marked by Javanese people, which made those who aren't of Javanese descent must master the Javanese language.

2.3.1.1 The Political Party Pertjajah Luhur

Pertjajah Luhur is a Javanese political party in Suriname. In the beginning, this party was allied with the political party Pendawa Lima. Pendawa Lima was led by Paul Salam Somohardjo, a man with a Javanese descent. Pendawa Lima was established on 2 January 1977 with five political parties with all Javanese background.⁵⁵ All the Javanese political party became one to encourage their power. Along the time Suriname ran into a difficult period. In the 1980's there was a coup where the leaders of Pandawa Lima were arrested by the military. The leader of Pendawa Lima, Paul Salam flee to Holland, by the time the situation in Suriname began to become better so Paul Salam returned back to Suriname and established the political party Pertjajah Luhur.

The new Pertjajah Luhur which still exist until now was established on 5 December 1998. One of the motivations to establish a political party by that time was because of the Javanese people who were dependent from not Javanese political party like the NPS (National Party of Suriname), VHP (*Vooruitstrevende Hervormings Partij*) which is dominated by non-Javanese people. The VHP is a political party with an Indian Hindustani background. Overall the main motivation

⁵⁵ Interview with the chairman of Pertjajah Luhur, Paul Salam Somoharjo, 04 April 2018

to establish the Petjjah Luhur was the strength and the unity of the Javanese population in Suriname. The name Pertjajah Luhur was chosen because of trust the Javanese people had in the political party. The Surinamese Javanese really trusted the Pertjajah Luhur that the power of the Javanese people in Suriname could encourage them.

2.3.1.2 Activities of Pertjajah Luhur

Every organization is established on the basis of their own goal and vision. To keep the organization exists, every organization have their own activities. This is also with the Pertjajah Luhur. The Pertjajah Luhur has several activities every year. The main activity that they organize is based on political activities, furthermore, they also held cultural activities. The cultural activities are held to conserve the Javanese culture and to introduce the Javanese culture to the Surinamese population.

Every 5 December the Pertjajah Luhur celebrate the day of the party and 9 August the day of *Wong Djowo*, this day is a very important event which they have memorialized every year, on the same day the Surinamese population also memorialized the day of the native people which are the origin of Suriname.⁵⁶ Beside that, there are also social events like *Bigisma Dey*. This event is meant for people over the sixty years. This event is all cost by the Pertjajah Luhur, all the accommodation is in charge of the Pertjajah Luhur. This day is a day social event can also be seen as a charity event. The Pertjajah Luhur also channel aid to countries

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

those affected by natural disasters. These aids were also channeled to Indonesia in 2004 when Tsunami hit Aceh.



Figure 2.3 The coat of arms of the Perjajah Luhur. The color of the coat of arms is red and white. Like the Indonesian flag (Merah Putih). The star in the middle is the symbol of the star from the Surinamese flag. The star represents the unity of all ethnic groups⁵⁷

2.3.2 Cultural Organizations

The name Suriname may be of Amerindian (American Indian) origin. Suriname is a multiethnic, multicultural, multilingual, and multi-religious country without a truly national culture. This multi-ethnic and multicultural made Suriname as a country with also different cultural Organization. One of the well-known Javanese cultural organization in Suriname is the “*Verenigde Herdenkings Javaanse Immigratie*”. Besides Javanese cultural organizations, there are also

⁵⁷ GFCnieuws, *PL introduceert actua festa*, accessed in <https://gfcnieuws.com/pl-introduceert-actua-festa/> (20/07/2018, 20:25 WIB)

Indian, Latin American, and Afro-American organizations. So every ethnic group in Suriname has their own organization and also their own national holiday to remember the arrival of every ethnic group in Suriname. Most of the population in Suriname are imported people. They are not originally from Suriname.

2.3.2.1 Verenigde Herdenking Javaanse Immigratie (VHJI)

The VHJI (*Verenigde Herdenking Javaanse Immigratie*) is one of the biggest and most popular Javanese organizations in Suriname. This organization is well known for their event they organize every year with thousands of visitors. This organization focus on cultural activities. The VHJI was established on 15 January 1985.⁵⁸ It began all with a gathering of different organizations like Indramayu, The Pionier, Puwani and other individuals who were not affiliated with an organization. This meeting ended up to the forming of the “Committee Commemoration of Javanese Immigration”

In the beginning, this organization was named “The Pionier” which was established on 16 March 1977.⁵⁹ The motivation to establish this organization was on the basis to strive for national build-up and national improvements in general and in particular to assist the less fortunate. Second, promoting active participation in all social improvements in general. Third, to cultivate a better understanding among people and to ensure that cooperation serves each other's interests better. Besides that, the founders of this organization think it is very important to preserve

⁵⁸ Verenigde Herdenkings Javaanse Immigratie, *KUNST EN KULTUUR*, accessed in <http://www.vhji.sr/kunstcultuur/> (26/05/2018 , 21:20 WIB)

⁵⁹ Interview with the Secretary of VHJI, Sharon Pawiroredjo , Malang, 23 June 2018

the cultural heritage, in addition, to increase the awareness of the Surinamese with Javanese descent to actively participate in the national social event.

2.3.2.2 Activities of VHJI

The name of this organization says it all “VHJI” which means Memorial Javanese Immigration Association. One of the biggest events they organize is the Memorial of the Javanese Immigration in Suriname. Every year on the 9th of August they organize various activities in different places. They enhance the Javanese people which arrived for the first time in Suriname. Besides that, they also hold Javanese traditional dance lesson, Javanese language lessons, Gamelang, pencak silat and many more. One of the biggest events they organize is Indo Fair. Indo Fair is an exhibition where they all exhibit Indonesian culture, begin with Indonesian food, fashion, culture, furniture and many more, to organize this event the VHJI collaborate with the Indonesian government.

The VHJI in cooperation with the Indonesian Embassy in Paramaribo has built a monument in order to 100 years of Javanese immigration. This monument is called the “Sana Budaya” which was built on 8 of August 1990. Sana Budaya is a place where all the activities of the VHJI are held. All the festivals that they organize in order to the Javanese people in Suriname.



Figure 2.4 The Monument “SANA BUDAYA”⁶⁰

The memorial is centered on Sana Budaya, where there is a monument to the arrival of the Javanese made by the Javanese descendant of Soeki Irodikromo. The warning is marked by the laying of wreaths as an expression of gratitude and appreciation for the hard struggle of Javanese ancestors from Indonesia to arrive and settle in Suriname. Celebrations and the laying of wreaths are also held at Marienburg, there are sugarcane plantations and sugar mills where the Javanese first worked.⁶¹

⁶⁰ Georgia popplewell, Sana Budaya, accessed in <https://www.flickr.com/photos/georgiap/9548165491> (19/08/2018, 14:20 WIB)

⁶¹ Siti Asiyah, *9 Hari besar perayaan di Suriname*, accessed in <https://kumparan.com/siti-asiyah/perayaan-hari-hari-besar-di-suriname> (03/04/2018, 20:20 WIB)

2.3.3 Religious Organization

Suriname is a multi-religious country with Christianity as the dominant religion. The three major religions are Hinduism, Christianity, and Islam. About 20 percent of the Hindustani are Hindus, 13,5 percent are Muslims which is divided by east Muslims and west Muslims, and 40.7 percent are Christians. and 3.3 percent follow indigenous religions.⁶² Most Creoles are Christians: the largest denominations are Roman Catholicism and the Moravian Church (*Evangelische Broedergemeente*); the Pentecostal Church has been growing and most Javanese are Muslims and the other half are Christians. Even not all the Javanese Muslims are practicing Muslims. The Muslims in Suriname are Muslims mix with Kejawan. Beside that, there are Jews, Atheist, Winti, Buddhist, Kejawan and much more religion.

Islam itself in Suriname is divided by east prayers and west prayers. The west prayer is the one who mixes Javanese culture with Islam. The Javanese still hold tight on the teachings of Java. They held various of ceremonial e.g mitoni (7 months of pregnancy) Slametan, Javanese marriage ceremony,

2.3.3.1 Stichting der Islamitische Gemeente in Suriname (S.I.S)

Stichting der Islamitische Gemeente in Suriname is an organization that focuses on religious activities which are led by Javanese Muslims. This organization is one of the biggest Muslim Organization in Suriname beside SMA which have a background of Indian Ancestors. The SIS was established in 1970,

⁶² State gov, Suriname, accessed in <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/171795.pdf> (08/05/2018, 07:41 WIB)

august 2nd by an Indonesian man named Mohammad Chiragar.⁶³ At that time the Javanese Muslims in Suriname really needed an Islamic organization that needed to be recognized by the government of Suriname, so that they could get help from the government in times they needed it. They established this organization to spread and expand Islam in Suriname which was and still a minority religion in Suriname. The biggest group of Muslims in Suriname are dominated by the Javanese people. They are the biggest group of Muslims because at that time they were sent to Suriname, their ancestor adhere to Islam as their religion. The Javanese people held Islam as their religion from generation to generation, even though there or some other religious they adhere except Islam like Christian, Hindu, Buddha, and atheist.

The SIS is an Islamic organization which holds strictly to the sharia of Islam. They don't mix the Javanese culture with Islamic sharia. In the beginning, the Suriname Javanese Muslims often mixed the Javanese culture with Islam. They mixed the Javanese culture like *sesajen* and many more Javanese culture with Islamic activities. The most obvious thing is the direction they pray, in Suriname, there is two kind of Muslim groups.⁶⁴ The first one is those who pray in the direction of the Ka'ba (the direction to the East) which called *madep ngulon* and those who pray to the West also called *madep ngetan*. This diversity began when the first Muslim Javanese arrived in Suriname, in reference to the fact that many of the

⁶³ Ranu Abelakh, *Voorouders eren voor aanvang vastenmaand Ramadan*, accessed in <http://www.starnieuws.com/index.php/welcome/index/nieuwsitem/29722> (10/05/2018, 10:23 WIB)

⁶⁴ Indah Wulandari, *Islam di Suriname ; Potret kehidupan Muslim etnis Jawa*, Republika (30 January 2011) accessed in http://ftp.unpad.ac.id/koran/republika/2011-01-30/republika_2011-01-30_110.pdf (03/05/2018, 11:06 WIB)

original immigrants built their mosques in Suriname facing west. The first Javanese which came directly from Indonesia prayed in the west direction, as they had in Java. This happened because at that time there wasn't any compass which could guide them. This tradition was held firm from generation to generation. Whereas the longitude of Suriname dictates that Mecca is in fact to the East. It was only in the 1930s that people began to realize that the Kaaba was not located to the West, but to the northeast of Suriname.⁶⁵ A group led by Pak Samsi of the Surinamese Islamic Organization Sahabatul Islam then began to encourage people to change the direction of prayer from West to East; those who did so became the more orthodox Muslim group.

2.3.3.2 Activities of Stichting der Islamitische Gemeente in Suriname

As one of the biggest Islamic organization in Suriname, the SIS have several activities. The most activities that they organize are religious activities. They are holding a lot of Islamic Seminar, training, they build Islamic elementary schools in all parts of Suriname. The training they organize is vacation training. In this training, they are taught how to do the prayer, the Friday prayer speech, the adzan, and many more Islamic teaching. Until now they the SIS have five elementary schools. The first one is the Nabawi School that is located in the district of Paramaribo. Second is the Baiturrahman School that is located in district Commwijnje furthermore there is Amir Chiragar School and Jamijatul Islamiyah School that is located in district Marowijnje and Para. Initially, it was hard to open

⁶⁵ Pamela Allen, *Mulih nDjowo: Repatriation and Nostalgia for Home Among the Javanese of Suriname*, Indonesian Study working papers, The University of Sydney, No 16 , july 2013

the school and get students, so the members of the Jamaah of the SIS gathered their children which later began to grow. This made the SIS asked help to the government of Suriname to support them. Now, these schools get help from the Suriname government and also the teachers are getting paid by the Suriname government. It was an important thing for the SIS to open Islamic schools in Suriname, so at school, they could also get some Islamic lesson which is a part of da'wa (spreading the Islamic teachings)

In the holy month of Ramadhan, the SIS have their own schedule which they visit every mosque that is located throughout Suriname. There are some Islamic teachers taken from other countries, like the Middle East and Indonesia. The Ramadhan safari begins from Paramaribo, which is the capital city of Suriname until Nickerie. In total, they have 52 Mosques in Suriname which is located in every district that is managed by Javanese.

On every big Islamic day like Eid-UI- Fitr, and Eid- UI- Adha the organization holds a joint prayer with all Muslim in Suriname especially which is bound to the SIS. All Mosques which is a member of the SIS gather together to pray the Eid prayer. This is one of the biggest moment to meet all the Javanese brothers and sister from all over Suriname, something that happens rarely which also is the main purpose of this happening. This Eid prayer is not only for the Javanese people in Suriname but also for every Muslim who like to attend the Eid prayer. This joint prayer is held at an open air location in front of the President Palace which is also across the National Assembly of Suriname called “ *De Onafhankelijkheids*

*Plein*⁶⁶". This Eid prayer is one of the biggest Eid prayers that is held in Suriname which is also live on the national television of Suriname. The day of Eid- Ul- Fitr is also a national holiday in Suriname. Every religious group in Suriname have a day off on their special religious day. Beside that SIS also coordinate the Haj from Suriname. So every person who wants to go to Haj can enroll oneself to the SIS. The SIS organize everything concerning to Haj. The training of Manasik Haji, their Visa's which they have to be managed in the Netherlands, their Stays and everything about the Haj. The People who go with SIS are the average Javanese, there are also some few Chinese and African people but most of them are Javanese. The Indian people are separated because the Indian Muslims in Suriname has their own Haj coordination, but if there are some problems or shortcoming, the Indian organization cooperate with the SIS.

⁶⁶ The square is located in the historic city center near the Suriname River. Grass is in the middle of the square. There are some important buildings around the square. Before 1975 the square was also called the Gouvernementsplein, the Oranjeplein or the Paradeplein. All historic events are held at the Onafhankelijk plein e.g Independence day , abolition of slavery day, historical day of every ethnical group and many more.



Figure 2.5 The Day of Eid-ul Fitr at the *Onafhankelijkheids Plein* which is attended by the President of Suriname, Desi Bouterse (In the middle) and Minister of Foreign Affairs (on the right) which is from Indian descendant (both without a cap). In the middle of them the former chairman of the SIS, Sobari Ridwan.⁶⁷

The SIS is one of the biggest Javanese organizations in Suriname which has various of activities. Every year the SIS is organizing their Eid prayer with scrum of Javanese people in Suriname in front of the president palace. This Eid prayer is attended by the president of Suriname and some ministers adhering to Islam. This is also one of the reunions between the Javanese people in Suriname along the ten district. The Eid prayer begin around 8 o'clock Surinamese time, which is also live on the national television.

⁶⁷ Waterkant, *Moslims in Suriname vieren einde Ramadhan*, accessed in <https://www.waterkant.net/suriname/2016/07/06/moslims-suriname-vieren-einde-ramadan/> (19/07/2018, 08:09 WIB)